

APPENDIX B - FOREST PLAN AMENDMENT #21

Bitterroot National Forest

Land and Resource Management Plan

November 2001

Introduction

The Bitterroot National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan (Forest Plan) was approved in September 1987. Changes affecting the Forest Plan since that time have required periodic amendments to keep it current. This amendment applies only to the Burned Area Recovery Project and pertains to the following Forest Plan standards:

- Forest-wide snag retention standard.
- Forest-wide elk habitat effectiveness standard in Laird Creek.
- Forest-wide thermal cover standard in the Skalkaho-Rye Geographic Area.
- Coarse woody debris standards for several Management Areas.

The Burned Area Recovery Project and this amendment are designed to meet the Forest-wide and Management Area goals and objectives as described in the Plan. The relationships between this amendment and Forest Plan goals and objectives, as well as potential effects of this amendment are further described in the Burned Area Recovery Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS pages I-16 to I-20 and throughout Chapter IV).

Changes to Forest Plan Standards

Snags

Forest-wide standard 2.e.(3) (FP page II-20) is clarified and amended for this project to read:

“Snags should be maintained within each Burned Area Recovery activity area at or above the levels specified in the following table and explanations:

Table B-1 - Snag Standard

VRU	Snags (average trees per acre)
2	2-5
3	4-12
4	10-15

- Distribution of retained snags will be irregular and clumped, include representation across size classes in the unit, but favor the largest trees.
- Snags retained in RHCA exclusion zones will be in addition to the snags per acre left in treatment units.
- In order to meet OSHA requirements for a safe work environment, retained snags must be grouped in helicopter harvest units. Groups may be retained in “lobes” or other concentrations within treatment units outside and contiguous with RHCAs or other areas adjacent to treatment units.
- Minimum snag levels are regardless of fire severity.

Elk Habitat Effectiveness

Forest-wide standard 2.e.(14) (FP page II-21) is amended for this project in the Laird Creek third order drainage (03m307-4) to read:

“Manage roads in the Laird Creek third order drainage to attain at least 45% elk habitat effectiveness.”

Big Game Winter Range

The Forest-wide standard for big game winter range (FP ROD pg. 8) is amended for this project in the Skalkaho-Rye Geographic area to read:

“Winter range thermal cover will be maintained at or above four percent within the Skalkaho-Rye Geographic Area.”

Management Area Standards for Woody Debris (Soil Productivity and Non-game Species Habitat)

Management Area standards

MA-1: 3.f.(4) – page III-6

MA-2: 3.f.(3) – page III-12

MA-2: 3.j.(2) – page III-13

MA-3a: 3.f.(3) – page III-18

MA-3c: 3.f.(2) – page III-32 are amended for this project to read:

“To maintain soil productivity and meet wildlife objectives, coarse woody debris should be maintained within each Burned Area Recovery activity area at or above the minimum levels identified in the following table and descriptive objectives.

Table B-2 - Coarse Woody Debris Objectives

VRU	Fires Severity	Coarse Woody Debris
2	Low	5 tons/acre
	Moderate / High	10 tons/acre
3	Low	20 tons/acre
	Moderate / High	20 tons/acre
4	Low	25 tons/acre
	Moderate / High	25 tons/acre

- These are minimum coarse woody debris amounts to be retained for a given VRU and fire severity. They are to be maintained at the treatment area (unit) level rather than on an acre-by-acre scale. To account for the natural variability and potential for each area, site-specific prescriptions will be developed, with appropriate interdisciplinary involvement, to specify the appropriate amount of CWD to leave over and above these minimums.
- Retain the recommended woody debris with material generally in larger size classes (greater than 4” in diameter) and well distributed across the treatment area (Graham et al., 1994 and Graham, personal communication 2001). Material greater than 4 inches in diameter and not consumed in the fires of 2000 can be included in the tonnage.
- Material should also vary by species and by size classes available across the treatment area.
- The coarse woody debris amounts are in addition to designated snags (dead trees retained for wildlife needs as described in Table B-1), snag replacement trees (live trees retained to provide snags in the future), stumps, woody material less than four inches in diameter, and logs placed on slope contour for post-fire erosion control.
- Material to be retained for coarse woody debris may or may not be felled to the forest floor. Coarse woody debris material may be left standing and allowed to fall naturally over time.

In areas of low severity burns, much of the pre-fire coarse woody debris is still present. If any additional coarse woody debris per acre is needed, dead/dying trees and/or green/live trees (coarse woody debris recruitment) may be used to achieve the minimums listed above.”